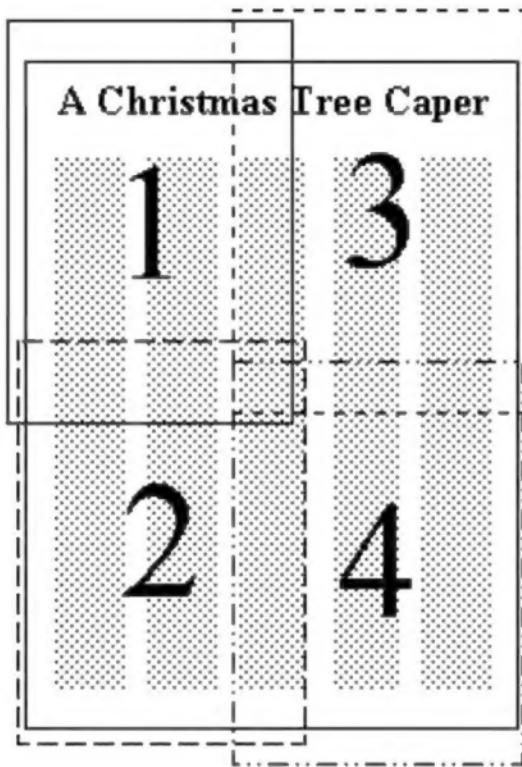


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.





## NO SPECK OF DUST

By JACK RICHIE and JRMA REITCI

(© 1958 by News Syndicate Co. Inc.)

POLLY ADAMS sighed as she put down her magazine. In stories a woman got a new hat or hair-do and immediately rekindled her husband's flickering interest. If that were only true in life.

Polly's mother had warned her about other women, but what could you do when your nightly rival turned out to be a basement workshop?

She glanced around the living room. The furniture was polished to mirror perfection and there wasn't a speck of dust anywhere. There was a place for everything and everything was in its place. And Polly's mother had taught her that there was more to cooking than opening cans.

George hadn't once complained about the food in three years of marriage.

Polly shook her head in bewilderment and got up to put the magazine back into the magazine rack. She almost collided with her husband as he came in.

He was carrying a sandwich in one hand and a glass of milk in the other. He eased his lanky six foot frame down on the davenport.

"Dear," Polly said, her eyes watching the sway of the milk in the glass, "wouldn't you be more comfortable with that in the kitchen?"

"I doubt it," George said in a tired voice. "But," he continued, maneuvering himself back on his feet, "I wouldn't want to get any crumbs on your nice, clean rug, so the kitchen it is."

THOUGHTFULLY  
LIT HIS PIPE

When he returned he thought—

slightly. "Have you ever considered washing on Tuesday?"

"Everybody washes on Monday!" Polly gave George an accusing look. "And everybody mows the lawn on Monday night. Last week . . ."

"I missed the 5:15," George said. "I'll make Herculean efforts not to miss it today."

Polly was washing the dinner dishes that evening when the rhythmic hum of the lawn mower outside came to an abrupt stop.

She went to the window to investigate.

George was leaning on the fence, talking to a very attractive woman. Suddenly he put one hand on the fence and vaulted to the other side.

### HE SAID LITTLE, RETIRE EARLY

He returned an hour later. "Her name is Diana Whiting and she's a widow," he informed Polly. "I helped her move furniture."

"Did you put away the lawn mower?" Polly asked.

"Her hobby is building ship models," George continued. "She invited us over for tomorrow night. Informal."

"The lawn mower," Polly said.

"You know," George said after a moment, "I've come to the conclusion lately that I am not at all like your father. I do have a 'No' in my vocabulary, even if

floated in through the screened window. Polly sat up with a start. George was naive about women, especially designing widows.

She marched next door.

"I'm so glad your headache is gone," Mrs. Whiting greeted Polly. "I did so want to meet my new neighbor."

Her smile was friendly and disarming. But you couldn't trust widows. Polly looked about for her husband.

He was seated on the floor, sanding the hull of a model ship.

Watching him with large, intent eyes, was a boy about six.

"My son, Davey," Mrs. Whiting said. "He should have been in bed hours ago, but he doesn't have much company, so . . ." She smiled down at the boy. "Looks like they're going to be great friends, doesn't it, Polly?" She crushed her cigarette into an overflowing ash tray. "May I get you a Coke?" she asked.

Polly nodded, then glanced at George. He ignored her, but she noticed he looked relaxed and at home among the clutter on the floor as he helped himself from a bowl of popcorn.

Messy. Even more messy than the Harringtons had been. Polly ran an exploratory finger over a table top.

"Dusty, isn't it?" Diana Whiting said, standing at her elbow with the Coke. "Bill always said I was a terrible housekeeper, but he admitted I was a pretty good homemaker." She smiled reminiscently. "Bill believed that comfort and companionship was much more important to a happy marriage than a spotless house, and

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#### THOUGHTFULLY LIT HIS PIPE

When he returned he thoughtfully lit his pipe. Before he shook out the match, Polly was beside him with an ash tray.

"Here," she said helpfully. "This is the ashtray you used before. There's no use dirtying them all up."

"One thing I liked about the Harringtons, our former neighbors," George said, "they used all their ashtrays."

"Their house was always messy," Polly said.

"That's a matter of opinion," George said.

"Not exactly dirty, but messy," Polly continued. "I never could understand why you spent so much time over there."

"You wouldn't," George said. "Well, guess I'll go downstairs and work on my bookcase some more."

The next morning at breakfast, George glanced out the window. "Have you found out who our new neighbors will be?" he asked. "I see a moving van just pulled up."

"No," Polly said. "And I haven't time to find out today. It's Monday, you know."

"Dear," George said, smiling

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"You know," George said after a moment, "I've come to the conclusion lately that I am not at all like your father. I do have a 'No' in my vocabulary, even if I've allowed it to become rusty. However . . ."

Polly hadn't thought of her father for a long time. He was a quiet man who said little and went to bed early, she remembered. A little man who lingered over his newspaper every evening and went into the basement when he wanted a smoke.

The next evening, George changed into a pair of rumpled slacks and a T-shirt.

"I thought we were going over to Mrs. Whiting's," Polly said.

"Sure," George nodded. "You'd better change to something that can stand wrinkles. We're going to work on boat models."

"Boat models or not," Polly said, "I've laid out your gray suit . . ."

George shook his head. "She said informal."

"You can't go over looking like a tramp," Polly said. "I won't go with you, unless you change . . ."

"O.K. Suit yourself," George said. He slammed the door on his way out.

Polly sat for a while, nursing her anger. Her father would never have done a thing like that!

A peal of feminine laughter

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## OF DUST

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I guess he was right. Don't you agree, Polly?"

Polly nodded politely, coloring. "Bill was a wise man," George said. He picked up bits of balsa, bamboo and several cutting knives and added them to a half-filled box. "Thanks for this kit, Diana," he said. "It's been a wonderful evening."

"Davey and I enjoyed having you here," Diana said. "Come over often, please." She pressed Polly's hand. "I'm a lucky woman to have such a nice couple for my neighbors."

Polly spent a sleepless night. By morning she had made several resolutions.

### THE WEATHER AND HIS NEWSPAPER

After George left for the office, she headed for the basement. She stumbled against the basket of wash waiting to be ironed, then resolutely pushed it under a table. She lifted her chin. There wasn't any law that said you had to iron on Tuesday!

In the basement, she found the box George had brought home from Mrs. Whiting. She carted it upstairs and put it down in the middle of the living room rug.

Then she paged through the phone book and dialed a number.

When George returned that evening, Polly in slacks and a sweater, met him at the door with a smile and an ardent kiss. Also a bandaged finger.

George, seemingly preoccupied, returned her kiss dutifully, then strode past her into the house.

During dinner he limited his conversation to the state of the weather, then picked up his newspaper and went into the living room.

For a moment Polly's con-

science fought with her new resolve, then she followed George. She didn't even stop to stack the dishes.

George immediately buried himself behind his newspaper. He made no sign that he noticed the box on the floor.

Polly kneeled down, opened the box, and emptied the entire contents on the rug.

Slowly, George lowered his newspaper.

"This is going to be quite a job," Polly said shyly. "I'd like to try—but I'll need your help . . ."

George let himself down beside her. He took her face between his hands and looked into her eyes. "Hello," he said after a moment. "I remember you from somewhere . . ."

"Would you like me to make some popcorn?" Polly asked, her heart quickening.

"We'll dispense with that tonight," George laughed. "Say what's the matter with your finger?"

"Well," Polly said. "I guess I'm rather clumsy. But the teacher in the woodworking class I enrolled in today said I'd learn . . ."

George grinned as he put his arms around Polly. "How come?" he asked.

"If you can't lick 'em, you join 'em," Polly quipped, snuggling close to her husband.

Her sudden movement dislodged the pipe from George's shirt pocket. It fell to the rug scattering a cloud of ashes.

"Never mind," Polly smiled. "Good for the rug, you know."

"Lady," George said, "I'm sure going to like living in your house from now on—and on—." He punctuated the statement with a satisfactory kiss.

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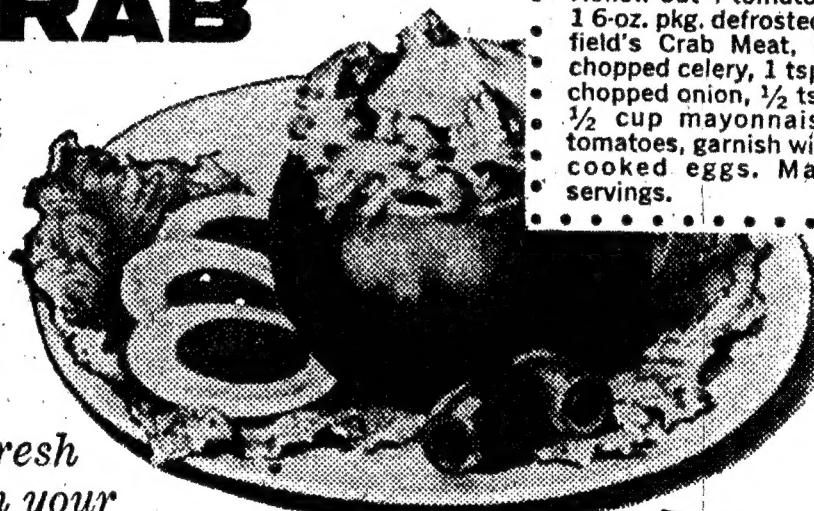
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